

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1904

INFO AMCONSUL LENINGRAD

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY TELAVIV

USMISSION USUN NY

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 9336

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR UR US

SUBJ: SYRIAN AMBASSADOR DISCUSSES MIDDLE EAST

REF: MOSCOW 9004

1. SUMMARY. DURING MY CALL JULY 1, SYRIAN AMBASSADOR JAMIL CHAYA TOLD ME HE BELIEVED THE SOVIETS DID NOT ANTICIPATE A RECONVENED GENEVA CONFERENCE "ANYTIME SOON." HE FORESAW THE IMMINENT RESUMPTION OF THE SECRETARY'S STEP-BY-STEP DIPLOMACY, WHICH HE DESCRIBED AS A "GIVEN" INGREDIENT OF AN OVERALL MIDDLE EAST SETTLEMENT. CHAYA STRESSED THAT THE UNITED STATES SHOULD ACCEPT PALESTINIAN PARTICIPATION AT GENEVA IN PRINCIPLE;
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THE DETAILS RE NUMING AND FORM OF PARTICIPATION WOULD

THEN FOLLOW WITHOUT TOO MUCH DIFFICULTY. THE SYRIAN CONSIDERED AN INDEPEDENT STATE AS THE ONLY SOLUTION TO THE PALESTINIAN PROBLEM, BUT HE VIGOROUSLY REJECTED THE CONCEPT OF AN ARAB-JEWISH FEDERATION AS UNREALISTIC. END SUMMARY.

2. GENEVA CONFERENCE. CHAYA EMPHASIZED THAT THE SINGLE ESSENTIAL PRECONDITION FOR FORWARD MOVEMENT TOWARD A ME STELEMENT IS THE ALL PARTIES CONSIDER PARTIAL AGREEMENTS AS ELEMENTS OF AN OVERALL "GLOBAL SETTLEMENT." WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK, CHAYA QUITE OPENLY ACCEPTED A RENEWAL OF THE SECRETARY'S STEP-BY-STEP DIPLOMACY AS A "GIVEN." CHAYA SAID HE "ASSUMED" THE SECRETARY WOULD BE RETURNING TO THE ME BEFORE LONG, AND THE SYRIAN WAS " THAT AN ISRAELI-EGYPTIAN INTERIM AGREEMENT WOULD BE REACHED. IF THIS WERE ACHIEVED, CHAYA FORESAW A SUBSEQUENT AGREEMENT BETWEEN ISRAEL AND SYRIA. IN CHAYA'S VIEW, MOSCOW WOULD RAISE NO OBJECTIONS TO THESE PARTIAL AGREEMENTS IF THEY WERE ACCEPTED BY ALL CONCERNED AS INTEGRAL PARTS OF A GENERAL PEACE AGREEMENT. THE AMBASSADOR SAID THE SOVIETS DO NOT SEE THE RECONVENING OF THE MEPC AS BEING FEASIBLE IN ANY NEAR TERM. HE INDICATED THAT SYRIA AGREED WITH THIS UEW.

3. PALESTINIANS. ACCORDING TO CHAYA, SYRIA TAKES THE POSITION THAT ARAFAT ACKNOWLEDGED THE EXISTENCE OF ISRAEL WHEN THE PLO LEADER ACCEPTED THE PRINCIPLE OF PALESTINIAN PARTICIPATION AT A RENEWED GENEVA CONFERENCE. (COMMENT: PRESUMABLE CHAYA WAS REFERRING TO THE JOINT COMMUNIQUE OF MAY 5, IN WHICH ARAFAT -- COMPLETING A VISIT TO MOSCOW -- FORMALLY ENDORSED PALESTINIAN PARTICIPATION IN A NEW MEPC. END COMMENT) CHAYA BELIEVED THAT IF THE US AND ISRAEL LOOKED AT THE ISSUED IN THIS MANNER, ONE MAJOR OBSTACLE TO PEACEFUL PROGRESS WOULD BE OVERCOME. WITH REGARD TO PALESTINE REPRESENTATION AT AN EVENTUAL MEPC, THE AMBASSADOR THOUGHT THE MAIN THING WAS TO MAKE CLEAR IN PRINCIPLE THAT THE PALESTINIANS (HE THOUGH IN PRACTICE THIS WOULD BE THE PLO) WOULD BE INVITED; THEREAFTER, THE "DETAILS" OF TIMING AND FORM OF REPRESENTATION COULD BE RESOLVED

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WITHOUT TOO MUCH TROUBLE.

4. CHAYA CONSIDERED THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN INDEPENDENT STATE AS THE ONLY SOLUTION TO THE PALESTINIAN PROBLEM, AND HE FELT THAT SUCH A STATE WOULD BE COMPOSED OF THE WEST BANK AND GAZA. ACCORDING TO HIM, ANYONE WHO DISCUSSED ADDITIONAL TERRITORY WAS SIMPLY INDULGING IN USELESS RHETORIC. CHAYA EMOTIONALLY REJECTED THE IDEA OF A FEDERATED ARAB-

JEWISH STATE, AS SUGGESTED BY SOME ISRAELIS. HE CALLED THIS "UNREALISTIC" SUGGESTION A "MOCKERY" OF THE HISTORY OF ARAB-JEWISH RELATIONS. HE ADDED HIS STRONG BELIEF THAT "IT WOULD BE BETTER IF PEOPLE DIDN'T MENTION THINGS LIKE THIS."

5. COMMENT: CHAYA' VIEWS SUPPLEMENT THOSE OF EGYPTIAN AMBASSADOR ISMAIL (REFTEL). NOT UNNATURALLY, THE SYRIAN REINFORCES MOSCOW'S (RATHER THAN CAIRO'S) POSITION THAT A SOLUTION TO THE PALESTINIAN PROBLEM IS CENTRAL TO ANY GENERAL PEACE AGREEMENT. WE ARE STRUCK BY THE EQUANIMITY WITH WHICH CHAYA APPEARED TO REGARD THE POSSIBLE RESUMPTION OF STEP-BY-STEP EFFORTS BY THE SECRETARY. END COMMENT.
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